

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 24-25 and 36-39, and add new claims 44-45 as follows. The changes in these claims from their immediate prior version are shown with ~~striketrough~~ or [[double brackets]] for deleted matter and underlines for added language. A complete listing of the claims with proper claims identifiers follows. This listing replaces all previous listings and versions of claims in the application.

1-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently amended) A method of producing a chewing gum product containing an antimicrobial agent wherein a rolling compound is applied to the chewing gum product and the antimicrobial agent is a part of [[a]] the rolling compound applied on the chewing gum product.

25. (Currently amended) A method of producing a chewing gum product containing an antimicrobial agent wherein a coating solution containing at least one material selected from the group consisting of sugars and polyol sweeteners is applied to a chewing gum pellet using a panning operation to build up a coating on the pellet, and the antimicrobial agent is a part of [[a]] the coating on [[a]] the chewing gum pellet.

26-27 (Canceled)

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the rolling compound further comprises one or more of a sugar and polyol sweetener.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the rolling compound further comprises one or more of mannitol, sorbitol, sucrose, starch, calcium carbonate and talc.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the rolling compound further comprises a sugar selected from the group consisting of sucrose, dextrose, fructose, maltodextrins and mixtures thereof.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the rolling compound further comprises a polyol selected from the group consisting of sorbitol,

mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, lactitol, hydrogenated isomaltulose, hydrogenated starch hydrolyzates and mixtures thereof.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the antimicrobial agent is selected from the group consisting of 1) 2,4,4-trichloro-2-hydroxydiphenyl ether, 2) cetylpyridinium chloride, 3) hexylresorcinol, 4) chlorhexidine digluconate and mixtures thereof.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein a high-potency sweetener selected from the group consisting of aspartame, alitame, salts of acesulfame, cyclamate and its salts, saccharin and its salts, thaumatin, monellin, dihydrochalcones and combinations thereof is mixed in the rolling compound with the antimicrobial agent.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the rolling compound is about 0.05% to about 10% of the rolling compound.

35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the rolling compound is about 5 ppm to about 1000 ppm of the chewing gum product.

36. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the [[coating further comprises one or more of a sugar and polyol sweetener]] antimicrobial agent is dispersed in the coating solution before the coating solution is applied.

37. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the coating [[further]] comprises one or more of dextrose, maltose, palatinose, xylitol, lactitol and hydrogenated isomaltulose.

38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the coating [[[further]]] comprises a sugar selected from the group consisting of sucrose, dextrose, fructose, maltodextrins and mixtures thereof.

39. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the coating [[[further]]] comprises a polyol selected from the group consisting of sorbitol, mannitol,

xylitol, maltitol, lactitol, hydrogenated isomaltulose, hydrogenated starch hydrolyzates and mixtures thereof.

40. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the antimicrobial agent is selected from the group consisting of 1) 2,4,4-trichloro-2-hydroxydiphenyl ether, 2) cetylpyridinium chloride, 3) hexylresorcinol, 4) chlorhexidine digluconate and mixtures thereof.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein a high-potency sweetener selected from the group consisting of aspartame, alitame, salts of acesulfame, cyclamate and its salts, saccharin and its salts, thaumatin, monellin, dihydrochalcones and combinations thereof is mixed in the coating with the antimicrobial agent.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the coating is about 0.01% to about 2.5% of the coating.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the coating is about 50 ppm to about 10,000 ppm of the chewing gum product.

44. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the antimicrobial agent is mixed with a flavor used to make the coating and added with the flavor to the coating.

45. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the antimicrobial agent is blended with a powder ingredient used to make the coating and added with the powder ingredient.